

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the Abstract on page 36, beginning at line 2, as follows:

A centralizer system is provided for use in a marine riser system, ~~the to provide a stress joint or keel joint with a upset portion. The centralizer being is preferably~~ heat-shrink fitted to ~~an the~~ upset portion of ~~a the~~ keel joint, ~~The upset portion having~~ has tapered sections on the upper and lower ends ~~that which may be of various shapes and lengths that~~ gradually blend into the outer diameter of the pipe used as the keel joint. ~~The centralizer may also be heat-shrink fitted to one of the tapered sections. The centralizer may or may not utilize guide sections mounted on either end thereof. In a preferred embodiment, the centralizer preferably comprising comprises axially~~ extending annular grooves in surrounding relationship to the upset portion, the grooves serving to permit forces acting on the centralizer to be redirected or dissipated to thereby prevent excessive buildup on a selected region of the upset portion adjacent the radial grooves. ~~In one embodiment, the grooves are formed annularly around the ends of the upset portion to thereby limit stresses that otherwise tend to build up on the ends of the upset portion.~~